

Amdt. dated April 5, 2005
Reply to Office Action of January 14, 2005

Serial No. 09/399,694
Docket No. ST999037
Firm No. 0055.0009

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 2, 3, 6, 7, 15, 16, 19, 20, 28, 29, 32, 33, 41, 42, 45, and 46 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 4-5, 8-14, 17-18, 21-27, 30-31, 34-40, and 43-44 have been cancelled without prejudice merely to expedite allowance of claims 2, 3, 6, 7, 15, 16, 19, 20, 28, 29, 32, 33, 41, 42, 45, and 46. Applicants submit that the pending claims 2, 3, 6, 7, 15, 16, 19, 20, 28, 29, 32, 33, 41, 42, 45, and 46 are patentable over the art of record and allowance is respectfully requested of claims 2, 3, 6, 7, 15, 16, 19, 20, 28, 29, 32, 33, 41, 42, 45, and 46.

Applicants would like to thank Examiner Pham for holding a telephone interview with their representative, Janaki K. Davda, on August 5, 2004, at 2:00 p.m. (EST). Claim 1 and the Knudsen patent were discussed. No agreement was reached.

Applicants would like to thank Examiner Pham for indicating that claims 2, 3, 6, 7, 15, 16, 19, 20, 28, 29, 32, 33, 41, 42, 45, and 46 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. These claims have been amended to place them in condition for allowance.

The rejections of claims 1, 4-5, 8-14, 17-18, 21-27, 30-31, 34-40, and 43-44 are moot. However, certain rejections will be discussed as they may affect the allowable claims.

As to claims 1 and 14, the Office Action indicates that the technique of performing a clean operation on an input table as claimed can be implemented with a pencil, an eraser, and a piece of paper that contains a data table. Also, as to claim 1 the Office Action indicates that claim 1 raises a question as to whether the claimed method is directed merely to an abstract idea that is not tied to a technological art, environment, or machine which would result in a practical application producing a concrete, useful, and tangible result to form the basis of statutory subject

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matter. Applicants traverse. A pencil, an eraser, and a piece of paper do not implement the claimed invention, and the claimed subject matter of claim 1 is statutory subject matter. To clarify the claims and to expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended dependent claims 2, 3, 5, and 6, which depend from claim 1, to refer to a "computer implemented" method and have amended dependent claims 41, 42, 45, and 46, which depend from claim 40, to refer to a "command data structure". For example, Applicants Specification, on page 19, lines 2-5 describes that a client provides a command data structure including various parameters and rules to a stored procedure that executes in the server to perform the clean operations within the database program 8 on the server.

As to claim 14, the Office Action indicates that the system for performing a clean operation has no physical structure of a machine or manufacture in terms of its hardware or hardware and software combination. Applicants traverse. The claimed "means" provide the physical structure. Also, dependent claims 28, 29, 32, and 33, which depend from claim 14, have been amended to refer to a "computer implemented" system to clarify the physical structure.

The Office action rejects claims 1, 14, 27, and 40 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph because there is insufficient antecedent basis for the limitation "if the rule definition does not specify an output table". Applicants traverse. There is no need for antecedent basis as this limitation is being introduced here. For clarification of the allowable dependent claims, claims 2, 3, 6, 7, 15, 16, 19, 20, 28, 29, 32, 33, 41, 42, 45, and 46 have been amended to refer to "in response to determining that the rule definition does not specify an output table". Applicants would like to thank Examiner Pham for indicating that this would overcome the rejection.

In paragraph 4, claims 1, 4, 5, 14, 17, 18, 27, 30, 31, 40, 43, and 44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Knudsen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,596,752). Applicants respectfully traverse. This rejection is moot.

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In paragraph 5, claims 8-13, 21-26, and 34-39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Knudsen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,596,752) in view of Agrawal et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,370,522 B1). This rejection is moot.

Conclusion

For all the above reasons, Applicant submits that the pending claims 2, 3, 6, 7, 15, 16, 19, 20, 28, 29, 32, 33, 41, 42, 45, and 46 are patentable over the art of record. Applicants have not added any claims. Nonetheless, should any additional fees be required, please charge Deposit Account No. 09-0460.

The attorney of record invites the Examiner to contact her at (310) 556-7983 if the Examiner believes such contact would advance the prosecution of the case.

Dated: April 5, 2005

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